

From CAF to CAFFA. Measuring linguistic performance and functional adequacy in Task-Based Language Teaching

Folkert Kuiken and Ineke Vedder

University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Linguistic performance elicited by language tasks has been generally assessed in terms of complexity, accuracy and fluency (CAF; Housen, Kuiken & Vedder, 2012). A whole array of measures has been proposed for the assessment of these three dimensions (e.g. Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki & Kim, 1998; Norris & Ortega, 2009; Bulté & Housen, 2012). There seems to be, however, growing agreement among researchers which measures are best suited to assess linguistic performance, although additional measures are still being proposed (e.g. Pallotti, 2014, 2015).

We will argue that in the CAF-triad an important dimension is missing, i.e. functional adequacy (FA), defined in terms of successful task fulfilment (Kuiken & Vedder, 2017). Our claim is that language performance is impossible without taking into account FA, as we consider FA to be a crucial dimension of language proficiency. In our presentation we will first discuss how FA as a construct can be operationalized and how it relates to CAF.

We will then show how FA has been reliably assessed by both expert and non-expert raters in different learning contexts, involving various source and target languages (Dutch, German, English, Italian), diverse proficiency levels (A2-C1), task types (instruction, narration, argumentation, decision and problem-solving), and task modality (speaking versus writing).

Next recommendations for future research will be provided as well as implications for instructional practice. We will demonstrate how the FA-scale can be used as a diagnostic tool, including the possibility of giving focused feedback to L2-learners. We will further emphasize the need to standardize methodology, rater training and data analysis of FA in order to assure comparability of studies. Finally, we will argue that in future research linguistic performance should not only be assessed by measures along the CAF-triad, but in terms of CAFFA.